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THE TIME, THE PLACE AND THE GIRL

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Nagill, Harry Byron, 1872-

The Time, The Place
and
The Girl

By
Ben Boston

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FOREWORD.

The Time, The Place, and The Girl has for its background the wild, romantic region of Wyoming, known as the Yellowstone National Park. This Park contains the most magnificent scenery in all the world, and is properly styled "Yellowstone, the Masterpiece of Creation."

Here was founded in a romantic way a story in which the principals on their way through the "Land of Geysers" met and were united (it being another case of "love at first sight") at the expiration of the sixth day while at the Grand Cañon Hotel—the last hotel on the circuit.

As there is no connection whatever between this story and the "play" which met with such tremendous success, a word or two of explantation will not be amiss, inasmuch as it is not the wish or intention of the author to deceive or defraud the reader in any sense of the word.

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The Author.

TAYLOR COL. AUG. 1940

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Leaving Gardner Station for Wonderland.
Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel.
Among the Pines.
Fountain Hotel, Lower Geyser Basin.
Old Faithful Inn, Upper Geyser Basin.
Old Faithful Geyser.
Interior View of Old Faithful Inn.
Lake Colonial Hotel, Yellowstone Lake.
Grand Cañon Hotel.

MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS HOTEL

THE TIME . . . . SUMMER.
THE PLACE . YELLOWSTONE PARK.
THE GIRL . . . . NELL.

Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, Wyo.,
August 1st, 190—.

Dear Billy:—

The real Radium is here, from down East, stopping at the Capitol of the Park, a regular "Midsummer Night's Dream" and a live wire over which your Uncle Dudley fell head over heels into the cistern, although, sure as preaching, I haven't touched a drop of the Oil of Joy for thirty-seven days. My pipe's out this afternoon, leaving the tangled thoughts and surrounding scenes clear to mind and soul, for here inspiration catches you unawares and Cupid's barbed arrows fly thick and fast, one of which punctured the silken gossamer around my pumping station just full of holes. How it all happened I'll tell you later, and of this

beautiful buxom girl of twenty summers, who hails from "The Beanery" near the first touchdown of the Pilgrims.

On the veranda seated opposite to me was a Study in Brown, gazing towards Mount Everts, or the Cleopatra Terraces, or possibly her dark brown optics were fastened upon the approaching Form of Blue from the army Post—Fort Yellowstone—where is stationed the Sixth U. S. Cavalry across a quadrangle of green velvet formed by the parade ground. The latter guess was the right one and proved to be the Key to the Situation.

The gallant army officer, General Smiley, (whom I had the pleasure of meeting afterwards) advanced with his lid off and saluted the girl with the silk rattlers with much ado. Right here my number was 23.

"A very delightful afternoon," spoke the commandant of the fort. "Perfectly charming, indeed," was the noise piped by this female Yankee, as she extended her tiny lily white to the man with brass buttons.

It was checkers with me, and as I was leaving the enchanted view, inspiring strains from Nurnberger's orchestra filled the air with harmony, while the spheres themselves answered the inspiration with its echoes from the silent sentinels and distant peaks with eternal white caps. The scene, the music, the girl, all served to intoxicate me and set my heart fluttering, and my feet slipping in their tracks.

That same evening General Smiley (a most congenial and accommodating gentleman) led me through the gateway of an introduction to this human dream with form Divine. Directly in front of me at the table was seated the General and to his right the girl who caused such an internal disturbance with me. This Gibson girl with hair a-la-Marcelle had Venus beaten into a pulp.

"Miss Miller, permit me to introduce to you my friend—Mr. Boston from the windy City by the Lake."

"Charmed to meet you, indeed," were the bon-bons she handed to me

"The pleasure is all mine," was the ozone I infused into her ears. This queen bee was the limit for politeness—her ways were winsome—soft, silky and smooth, to which no true sport could file a bill of exceptions and remain a devotee of the game.

The dinner over, the General begged to be excused as he hurried to his office in answer to a telephone call, which left the gates ajar for this summer girl and myself to become better acquainted.

"These culminating points of nature's beauty are splendid monarchs guarding silently the entrance to the 'Land of Geysers,'" spoke the dame with the brown orbs that flashed meteoric messages which could not be misunderstood.

"And the one in which I am particularly interested is officer of the day," whereupon I transferred the rose from my garden to hers, saying, "The petals contain my innermost secret."

"Yes," came the sweet reply with a naughty

little twinkle in her eye, "and I'll guard it carefully all the way through the Park."

My cardiac was working overtime; my windows were dimmed from the hot vapor she vented; my soul was on fire, which conveyed to the engineer in charge of my pumping station that I really was the king bee with Nell, so named from Old Drury.

This glorious running start and grand-stand play compelled me to unharness the blonde bales before we reached the Upper Basin. I could not play close to my belt and hope to come out winner with the peacharina from the Hub. Nell asked me if I would like to promenade down to the Terraces—meaning Minerva, Jupiter and Pulpit Terraces—and listen to the sermons from the purling hot streams as they flow. "They might interest you later on."

"It affords me the greatest of pleasure, I assure you," not noticing her repartee.

"Do you propose to ride all alone through the Park?" queried this superb artist with the three P's—paint, powder and pencil.

That was all the hunch I needed to buckle Nell on to my belt.

"Not if I have your kind permission to be seated aside of you on the coach," came the quick reply. It was my opener with Nell.

"You may have it," was her sweet response, and from which remark I became corpulent and chesty, actually forcing my collar button from its fastenings, and compelling me to hunt the hay for the night.

At eight o'clock the next morning, which was bright and clear, we were ready for the Coaching Trip and climbed into the front seat with the driver of the four-in-hand who was in charge of the huge but comfortable Concord.

"We're off in a bunch," said the driver, and he cracked his long whip in the air as the coach went rolling on its way to Wonderland.

"Isn't it just glorious to behold these natural filters (meaning the untainted hills of the Rockies), such a grand opportunity for a good, healthy, honest, old-fashioned recreation,"

chirped my side partner with the peek-a-boo waist.

"Perfectly sublime," was the steam that left my volcano as we made a turn in the road, threading our way and galloping through the Silver and Golden Gates without stopping for a fizz as a quencher, into the beautiful Swan Lake valley, where the ladies come from all parts of the world to develop swan like necks. Here we saw the beautiful Electric Peak and the Gallatin Range. Passed up the side trip to Bunsen's Peak on account of the "blow pipes" and not wanting to blow the bunch. The ride through Willow Park was like a trip into fairyland. Here "The Campers" make their first all-night stand and build their big log fires, sitting around which they tell stories of adventure, experience, etc., sing a few songs and then pile in for a refreshing slumber among the pines, in comfortable compartment tents.

Beautiful Apollinaris Spring now greeted our vision, followed by the great cliffs of natural Obsidian glass. On this volcanic glass, Billy,

SOLID COMFORT AMONG THE PINES

neither drills nor dynamite made an impression, as the dark brown substance resisted the efforts of the engineers until fires were built against these walls of solid glass. Sheltered behind wet blankets (ever have the wet blanket thrown on you, Billy?), the crews dashed water upon the heated surface, causing the glass to crack and crumble into pieces, and the way was successfully cleared for the road bed. We passed the placid waters of Beaver Lake and Roaring Mountain (which is a hillside of a thousand whistles from Hell), the Devil's Frying Pan and numerous sulphurous springs, which keep the pan hot for the next fellow. At noon tide we reached Norris Geyser Basin, where lunch was served prior to the continuation of our jaunt through "The Park of Parks," reaching the first hostelry at five-thirty, where a delightful repast was served and enjoyed by all of the tourists, and, in turn, by a restful night's sleep. Good night, Billy.

Yours as ever,

Ben Boston.

FOUNTAIN HOTEL—LOWER GEYSER BASIN

Fountain Hotel, Lower Geyser Basin,

August 2nd, 190—.

Dear Billy:—

Arrived here a little dismantled but still in the ring, with two up and one to go—that's me with the lemon. I suppose you have had one handed to you by this time from the fair fraud who lives in the country near the Bucks county line. It seems to delight the souls of the descendants of Eve to squirt the juice of this fruit into one's eyes nowadays, just to see the tears roll, even if he is not sorry for having broken her heart or circulated her coin.

At the hotel, Billy, we were watched by the gossips, a few of whom said I was a foreign nobleman; others took me for Mantell, but one eagle-eyed old maid—probably a school teacher from Chicago—positively stated that I was Packie McFarland, with whom I would sooner take the fatal count in advance, or take the Osler route, than put on the six ounce mitts for

a Queensbury function and wait for the gong.

That night I put on some agony so that I could butt in at the hop; wore my registered collar so that if I got lost in the whirl I would come out all right in the wash and be returned later as missing on first delivery.

Well, I had a swell time in the whirl of point lace and diamonds and,—well, Nell was sweating like a June bride-to-be from sheer nervousness, seeing me on the glide with a winner who had a creamy complexion and kinky chemical curls. This reversed blonde of nature was literally covered with jewels—whether near-diamonds I was not able to judge, because if I got a peep-in at them she might have told me to mind my own business—which, for her sake, I was trying my best to do, although under high pressure and wrapped up like a ball of yarn.

My! but this bit of laundry work was there with the waltz! So dreamy, so feathery, I almost felt levitated!

The number being finished, I returned to Nell, who told me to return to the enameled, tattooed, do-nothing flirts who call themselves the cream of society and have "400" worked in colors across their shoulder blades, or on $ $ $ appliqued gowns. Here I skidooed to the tall timbers. That held me for awhile.

Billy, what do you think of that for the white coat on a man's spine? Chilly, wasn't it? This female Indian, social butterfly and heart crusher literally pounded my Love Station to pieces and pumped it full of holes. Before leaving the Norris Lunch Station she had called me "darling," "dearie," and other confectionery names I never heard before in all my born days, then deliberately she threw the wet gunny-sack on me after the ball. I have had the skidoo number, but it's **NOW37** (up side down), and I was told to peddle my papers on some other train hereafter. As there are no trains in the Park, I just fixed things with her

in the morning on the coach, and before noon everything was hunky-dory with the goose on the upper-most branch.

Now, Billy, to the woods and fairyland, for I know that you are just dying in spots to know all about this quaint, queer but glorious galaxy of nature's wonders. After luncheon was served at the Station, we occupied ourselves in inspecting some of the Cañons and Geysers, among which may be mentioned the Geysers of Vixen, Congress, Inkstand, Monarch, Pearl, New Crater, and the Minute-Man, which by the way reminds me of my friend down in York State, George Tone, who made a life contract with A Crater and who turned the wheels of the Red Mill with such tremendous success.

I forgot to tell you, Billy, there are something like four thousand Hot Springs, large and small; a hundred geysers which are active and inactive, fifty beautiful lakes, ranging from the magnificent Yellowstone to very small lakelets;

numberless rivers and creeks well stocked with gamy trout; several glorious cañons; more than one hundred purple peaks (some of them snow-clad); nearly thirty waterfalls; large herds of deer (with horns and dears without horns), elk and antelope; many black and grizzly Teddies, but few of the cinnamon variety, and a goodly herd of bison, the American buffalo. Of course, Billy, I counted all these spots of interest that fill the soul with admiration, so you will have to let it go at that. When I got tired counting them, Nell took up the "Count," and that is where I made an error in my addition, for she was holding hands with the guy who had wind protectors growing beside each ear and who happened to be from the Court of St. James.

At the next stopping place of interest, I just chopped the little game with Nell and the deucedly awkward, don't-cher-know gent from across the Pond, by seating her on the middle seat, where he had no show of even a look in, ac-

cording to the rules of the paint and powder brigade.

This national playground has magnificent hard roads for driving which are sprinkled daily to keep the dust down—need sprinkling myself now as the coin gets away from me here in bales—almost blows away with the other dust.

Say, Billy, if this pippin was with me on the gay White Way she would surely block the traffic and congest the trade. Wonder if it is safe to take her on our return from the Park "Down Broadway" just to cause the rubber to snap in their human peninsulas?

That night I was struggling to free myself from strawberry white caps which gave me the worst case of internal asthma I ever had in my life—my, but they are bad for a sport. Billy, a word to the wise is sufficient—don't hit the white caps and expect to escape the hiccoughs—you'll be disappointed.

In my hurry to tell of these steam pipes from Hell, I almost overlooked the most noteworthy in this Basin, and which have enormous power and are rightly termed the "Star Performers." The Black Growler is so named on account of the "sage-brushers" rushing the can for washing purposes and the Hurricane from the loud noise resembling the rushing of winds.

The coach in the afternoon threaded the beautiful Gibbon Cañon as the road followed the windings of the Gibbon River, and after crossing a divide, continued beside the Firehole to the Lower Geyser Basin. We passed on this ride Beryl Spring; Falls of the Gibbon (eighty feet high), and Cascades of the Firehole River. In these rocky palisades and timbered slopes there is a feast for the soul. The Midway and Lower Geyser Basins contain the Fountain, Great Fountain, Clepsydra, Steady, Black Warrior and White Dome Geysers; Firehole Lake; Surprise, Mushroom, Buffalo, Five Sisters (to

whom no one has ever received an introduction) and many other spit-fire springs. Here the mammoth Paint Pots—cauldrons of boiling hot clay which are beautifully colored with all the tints of the rainbow—are located, and the women "take to them" naturally for their coloring properties, and get burnt for monkeying with nature's toilet articles. Excelsior Geyser has been quiet for years, but its crater is still there. Prismatic Lake, Hell's Half Acre and Turquoise Pool at the Midway must be mentioned also as points of worthy interest. The lake is the most beautifully colored spring in the Park, sending up clouds of steam from its surface day and night; it is very shallow and about two hundred and fifty feet wide. Here we put in a very comfortable night's rest prior to reaching the Upper Geyser Basin, where we found ourselves the next day.

Yours as ever,

Ben Boston.

OLD FAITHFUL INN—UPPER GEYSER BASIN

Old Faithful Inn, Upper Geyser Basin,

August 3rd, 190—.

Dear Billy:—

Here's where and how it all happened and the blink put on my crimson sunsets in the home for natural vaudeville. This down-East whirlwind loaded with beauty, pride and dignity—which, by the way, are characteristics of all female Yankees—was graceful of carriage, demure and quiet, and gave no immediate signs of balking and in no way even suggested latent possibilities of ever jumping the traces.

I soon stamped her my heart's ease during the few days among the bears and geysers. You would hold your breath, Billy, at the wonderful play of her features, and as her lustrous eyes sparkled and glistened beneath her daintily penciled brows—her red lips, now pursed up, now in a half pout, were tantalizingly tempting, while her latticed fronts rose and fell with the play of her emotions. I fell into a regular old-fashioned love spasm over this Bean-town prod-

INTERIOR VIEW OF OLD FAITHFUL INN

uct with the brown orbs, who wore a champagne Eton that must have been moulded to her curves; a beaut of a golf skirt, and suede slippers of brown with brass buckles and wide silk laces to match. Those pedals of hers with arched insteps supported by 16-8 heels on an "A" last were perfect dreams! These stunning creations "took the eye" of every one at the hotel. They had me.

Just a word about this quaint hotel, which is built entirely of logs, and of its kind the largest in the world. Billy, it is a massive and imposing piece of wood-craft, beautiful and harmonious in all of its details; electric lighted and heated with steam, while many of its rooms are fitted with both hot and cold water and private baths. The surrounding forests supplied the logs for its walls, while the interior decorations were artistically made from twisted and gnarled limbs and tree stumps. Old Faithful Inn is about nine miles from the Fountain Hotel, occupying a commanding view on high ground at

OLD FAITHFUL GEYSER

the extreme southern edge of the Upper Geyser Basin, and it stands alone among the most notable hotel resorts of this country. But a short distance from the Inn, and at regular intervals of sixty to seventy minutes, Old Faithful belches forth its clouds of steam and boiling water to a height of one hundred feet. On this steam jet at night time a monster searchlight is flashed with an effect that is gorgeous in the extreme. Among the lesser geysers of this Upper Basin, but none the less beautiful, may be mentioned the Giant and Giantess, Lion and Lioness, Grand, Beehive, Splendid and Riverside, Oblong, Sawmill, Economic, Fan and Turban. Emerald Pool, while not a geyser, is named from the color of its waters and is an interesting spot to everyone.

Well, Billy, you should have been an eye and ear witness to what was said and done that night while seated around the brink of Old Faithful. It was rich, sublime and ridiculous! To make matters worse, we were caught in the

act of kissing each other when the operator in charge of the machine on the roof of the Inn sent a dazzling flash of light upon Old Faithful while she was in a state of eruption. Nell nearly had a fit when she learned of the fact that we had been discovered. I soon quieted her nerves and allayed her restless feelings, however, as I looked this shirtwaist square in the face and told her without a wince that I loved her with the genuine Florentine frenzy.

"Oh, fluff!" she replied, and with her eyes said skidoo, meaning this was so sudden.

"I mean every word of it, Nell, and as long as I have ivy clinging to my towers you can have all of it you want," whereupon this dainty bundle of sweetness threw her arms around my neck and planted two kisses in succession on my cherry reds, when without warning the flashlight revealed to those guests at the Inn for the second time our doings around Old Faithful. That night sealed my fate with Nell. Had I gotten the righteous kick at the right time, in

the right place from the right person I would have then considered the act a saving grace. However, it didn't come, and that accounts for the absence of the blink on the twilights now. I told her I had an insane desire to make a life contract because her ways were so irresistible. Billy, take my hunch—beware of female whirlpools—there is always an undercurrent that is so treacherous that it often dashes one on the rocks and fills his pipes with water. Well, I got it and am still. Oh! what a cruel sentence to impose on one's self needlessly—one who is so unsuspecting and inexperienced, virtually selecting that particular night in such a romantic way to noose myself and to put the drag on all future outings.

Nell was a graceful spender of my mazuma while in the park, wanting everything and kind of curio that she came across, making me look, at times, like the human parcel delivery. First it was Indian baskets, then Indian blankets, Indian moccasins, until she had me

dancing like an Indian for fear of her wants not being supplied. I forgot to tell you, Billy, that when this pipe dream had her enameled face close to mine, I made the discovery that it was windproof and impervious to heat or cold and that the regular little black square was stationed closely to her right eye and just above a dainty dimple in her rosy cheek. Her luxuriant head of chestnut brown hair had me going south towards the mocking-birds. Frankly and freely I confess I lost no time in asking for enough of it to make a chain, and what do you think? She delivered the goods—that can be proven never grew under a guarantee. I told her it was such a shame to cut off those lovely strands, but she said, "No," they would look cute on me. I'm still wearing that chain, but the cuteness and charm have all worn off. I wonder why?

After the scene at the brink of Old Faithful came the eats, and that's where I had another jolt and lemon handed to me. Finding places

for ourselves in a quiet corner, I continued the piping. Nell soon licked up a few cordials, while Mamie Taylors with collars on held me for a while, at least until the love vapor had me trailing for keeps. It was the run of my life to keep up the pace that kills which I had started and could not stop for fear of being called a dead one by this study, and to stand strong in the center of her cardiac I was compelled to shove out the milled eagles frequently.

Afloat and above suspicion, I was getting along great and without a hitch, with all the longitude between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in my favor, for the reason of the cordials. We were now using the same napkin and sitting on the same chair, utterly unconscious of the fact that the waiter had left the door ajar for all of the dummies to get next to the doings inside. Toasted to a turn in that crucible, my endurance fagged and my wind failed me. Here the Bridge of Sighs broke down and I fell into the creek; then the splash-

ing of the waves began. "Nell," I said, "there's rats in your garret; why don't you kill 'em?" Instantly she swelled up like a human yeast cake, squared her shoulders, flashed her fiery lamps in my direction and told me my number was 23, and to shift my freight to the opposite side of the table. Incidentally she added for my information that I might consider the engagement broken and myself dismissed from the service, as I was not up-to-date, because I had the audacity to refuse her a cigarette and an occasional bottle of the sparkling effervescence.

Billy, she was laced so stiff and tight (both ways) that, on the level, she absolutely refused to listen to my pleadings. Why, the stays would not even bend! No wonder I was thrown down. I soon found that this tickling sensation at the bottom of the pumping station which could not be reached and scratched, was not what it is cracked up to be, but on the drop, a delusion and nightmare. Had me chasing colts.

On this nifty female I sowed my wild oats in a wild and picturesque country, and the seeds of wisdom I now have safely stored away in my vaults of experience as "ready reference" for my friends who are unsuspectingly led into any painted beaut's steel trap. My advice to the "lovelorn" is to take to the bunch grass and tanks and hide for the rest of their days. That night I had cracked ice in a towel on my head as a "soother." Say, Billy, have you ever taken the ice route for relief? It's great! But no more of it for me. I've had a complete cure and I soon won't have to tell how madly I love her until I'm black in the face. Nell is in a nasty humor to-night, so I guess I'll make for the hay.

Yours as ever,

Ben Boston.

LAKE COLONIAL HOTEL, YELLOWSTONE LAKE

Lake Colonial Hotel, Yellowstone Lake,

August 4th, 190—.

Dear Billy:—

Bright and early the next morning at eight o'clock we were off for the lake—our heads rid of all disturbances of the night before and our spirits aglee. I thought Nell was going to choke the sunshine from me, but she came through all right and the dark memories floated away on the air like mist long before we reached the West Arm Lunch Station.

Turning our backs on the Upper Basin with regret, still it left our souls full of delightful memories as we passed the Keppler Cascades and crossed the great Continental Divide twice at an elevation of eight thousand three hundred feet. This wild, exhilarating mountain ride was enchanting—it was not a fantasy filled with flying fairies and other woodland surprises, but the real thing that made every heart fill and thrill with delight—the natural resting place for

the beauty and the beast. Shoshone Point, where we had a magnificent view embracing Shoshone Lake and the Three Tetons (the latter many miles away and clad in white gowns the whole year round), impresses one with their solemn grandeur as they silently reign supreme in their majesty, fourteen thousand feet high.

Nestled among these forest-crowned hills which surrounded our view on all sides lay this beautiful inland sea—Yellowstone Lake—a most picturesque and noble body of water about seven thousand eight hundred feet above sea level—and noted for its salmon trout.

The outlook up this lake, which is twenty miles long, with an average depth of thirty feet, is one that stirs the emotions. The waters ripple and shimmer as they are hemmed in on the East by the Absaroka Range, extending the entire length of this placid body of water, while to the South rises in its purple beauty and splendor—Mount Sheridan.

At the Lunch Station are more of those Paint

Pots, Hot Pools and only one or two small geysers, which are the last of them, having left the geyser regions at the Upper Basin.

At one-thirty in the afternoon, when the lunch was over, the wheels were rolling towards the next stopping place for the night, which was the Lake Colonial Hotel—where a swell dance was given by the society brigade that claimed to be direct descendants of the Astabilts down around Newport. This social pow-wow reminded me of a band of Apaches on the war dance, who were burying their tomahawks into one another on all sides. One of these society squaws threw her hatchet at me, wanting to lift my scalp, but I saw it coming, so I side-stepped and ducked, letting some other duck get it in the neck—as is often the case.

This "smart set" was out in all of their finery; real old point lace and diamonds (to beat four of a kind) and a-la-subway gowns with the big V in the back; they were like moving pic-

tures, while the view from the front—well, I'll leave that to your imagination, Billy—but I'll gamble they had the goods. As they advanced towards you with the stony stare and icy elbow, it certainly lowered the temperature in that immediate vicinity for awhile. Some of those rented sparklers were beauties, and the "four-flushers" that hired them for special occasions at so much per evening were always in evidence when the dance was on, for the reason of their dazzling and scintillating effects.

The guys with the plugs hardly dared to touch the hands of these dainty, dancing divinities (which were gloved in immaculate whiteness to their elbows), for fear of being "called," if by chance a trademark had been left by one of them.

One of these idols of innocence gave everybody the cold storage smile and the white coat, but as I turned on the battery it soon had the desired effect as the brigade marched into the

banquet hall, where bottles with pretty colored streamers popped profusely, and the viands were placed where they would do the most good. In here we could see the "fleet" in their flying colors; some had burglar-proof faces; some had the wasp shape squeezed to the limit, and ready to snap at the girdle; while others evened up matters on the pedals and had to retire on the pretence of feeling faint, in order to relieve the pressure.

I soon drew my cork out of that bunch and with Nell strolled down by the lake, which was reflecting the moonlight with its shining waves of silver. It was a glorious sight! The queen of night shone in all of her beauty, while the Constellation and the Pleiades shot their twinkling messages across the firmament. Together we admired the lake, the moon, the scenery, voicing the same sentiments at every turn of the wheel, and before I was aware of the fact this candy girl, a graduate of the Emersonian

School of Expression, had me wrapped up like a ball of yarn and under high pressure. I was dangling at the end of the rope, and at the next oasis of the caravan I was roped—and am still holding on to the rope.

At this particular spot in the beautiful valley of the Yellowstone, I shot the bunk thick and fast towards the object of my affections, and what do you think, Billy? The girl with "the bucks" whose father was long on Union Pacific Common and Convertible 4's, piped "Yes" and closed the deal. I was in for the market on these 4's later—and a sweet dream from which I shortly awoke.

The beautiful and thoroughly remodeled Colonial Hotel is handsomely fitted and "home-like," overlooking Yellowstone Lake, and from its veranda the Tetons can be seen in the distance. Its colonial front and large columned porches at each end and center give an imposing and stately appearance that is most restful.

That night Nell and I decided we would thrash it out together and it was all cut and dried to spring on the bunch at the Grand Cañon Hotel the following evening. Good night, Billy, my blood's hot. I wonder if the moon could have caused it?

Yours as ever,

Ben Boston.

GRAND CAÑON HOTEL

Grand Cañon Hotel, Point Lookout,

August 5th, 190—.

Dear Billy:—

This is the last hotel on the circuit, occupying a beautiful site a short way from the brink of the Grand Gorge, through which the Yellowstone itself flows.

About half way between the Yellowstone Lake and the Grand Cañon the road passes through one of the "freakish" areas of the Park. It is repulsive, yet fascinating, and causes the curious tourist to stop and rubber. Mud volcano (sometimes called Mud Geyser), I learned from the driver, was quite active years ago, expelling mud to a tremendous height, and in all directions, making it very dangerous to approach, but of late years the phenomena have not appeared.

To the left of this extinct mud chimney, in a shallow ravine below, is the beautiful Gothic Grotto. Here the road crosses the Hayden Val-

ley, giving us a grand view of the Northern Pacific trademark formed by strange convolutions of nature in Trout Creek.

Centering to and about Grand Cañon is the climax of wonders—the culminating glory of the Yellowstone. Words are totally inadequate to extol their grandeur, tongues are speechless in the presence of nature's immensities. We stood spellbound, dumb, but filled with solemnity and veneration as the river plunges perpendicularly three hundred feet or more into a gloomy cavern below—that ever received so majestic a visitant.

At the edge of the precipice, the river, with a gurgling, choking, seething struggle, leaps with one bound into the tremendous chasm. Then the fall between jaws of rock leaping and plunging six hundred feet, where it is enveloped in mist and woven into rainbows that arch the face of the cataract in all colors of the prism.

The aqueous and atmospheric forces have

carved towers and domes, castles, turrets and spiral columns, together with deep caverns and gloomy chambers. Nature—the great architect and artist—here her immense escarpments, gorgeously portrayed in every conceivable color, at last blend harmoniously into solemn grandeur and beauty, completely captivating and overwhelming the mind, which is lost by the fascinations of the flaming gorge. Grand Cañon of the Yellowstone combines grandeur and immensity. Its shelving summits girted with trees, from its wild promontories you can look into the depths of Hell. With the memory confused, the lips locked in silence, this amazing scene of colors and sculptured rocks is profoundly impressed upon the soul.

The golden sunlight bursts down upon this immense barrier of rocks in dazzling rays from the blue ethereal vaults of heaven, while the imprisoned walls reflect and melt it into a flood of amber, mellow light, and the glorious sur-

roundings give forth the warmest, kindliest smiles of nature.

In this marvelous gorge nature culminated her handiwork of sculpture and color glory, and as it lingers in my memory like the outlines of a dream I simply stand with hands clasped and eyes up-turned toward the limitless expanse and say: "Amen."

Billy, I'll send you the brand I have been smoking in the Park as soon as I reach Gardiner—it's a fine cut that can be had only by going through this Wonderland for yourself. Speaking of fine cuts, Billy, did I ever tell you how fond of them I am at the hotels, where the outside cut is always given to me because it's well done; and, so am I for the rest of life's pilgrimage.

The happy hit came off this evening at nine o'clock and the rope spliced—the one that dangled in front of me at the Colonial—while the life contract was handed to me by a minister

from New Hampshire who happened to be sojourning at this hotel for a few days. The event of our lives was pulled off quietly and without ostentation—that means we were able to pay the preacher for the splicing act.

My wad of green had so dwindled I tried to work the gag on the clerk at the hotel by telling him that I had been "touched." Billy, have you ever been touched? Nice business, eh? Well, the score keeper behind the counter gave me the glassy stare, at the same time flashing a card under my nose that told of delinquent or star guests at the hotel. One said: "I'll pay Saturday night sure if I live." He's dead. Another said: "See you tomorrow." He's blind. Still another, "I hope to pay this week or go to hell." He's gone.

Our stay at the Grand Cañon Hotel was the real essence of the clover blossom—full of the nectar that fills the cup or like Omar with his little brown jug—no cans in his time—a slice of

bread and a beautiful damsel to sing for him at his pleasure, to chase the growler for the suds and to hold the cup at the brink! Say, Billy, wonder if this is the same brink? I believe it is, for something seems to whisper to me that the longest thing in married life is a loveless pilgrimage, and when one meets the wants of the other then each is suspicious of the other, because loving a few good women is real pleasure; loving a few of the others is real pain; loving your wife—the right woman—is half and half. Billy, my advice is not to get too much of the latter—then you're safe. The good woman is a blessing, God bless her, but the bad one (when she reaches the lower level) is like the lid off Hell, letting out fire and brimstone. Billy, be awful careful of these human lids, for when you strike a hot one she's like a volcano—ready to let go—then there's doings. Good night—I'm for the sleeps.

Yours as ever,

Ben Boston.

Mount Washburn, Above the Clouds,
August 6th, 190—.

Dear Billy:—

Next door to heaven today, but could not get in; great consternation prevailed within us when Nell and myself received the cold shoulder on the summit of Mount Washburn, the altitude of which is ten thousand feet, and carpeted in white.

What a grand panoramic or bird's-eye view we had from this silent sentinel of the Park; it is truly marvelous, giving to each of us a connected and accurate idea of the region between the Mammoth Hot Springs—our starting point—and the great and beautiful lake itself—just like an open book. After drinking in these gifts of the gods, we covered the ten miles back to the hotel by way of "Uncle Tom's Trail," and then for a farewell look from Inspiration Point at the culminating and most magnificent spot in nature's album.

Here the yellow, the gray and the brown predominate in the rocks, while above is the azure

blue and below a carpet of green. Such a commingling of colors no artist can paint; no tongue describe, yet speak as it must in silence to the soul, where it sears upon the tablets of memory these flaming words: YELLOWSTONE the MASTERPIECE of all that is sublime and beautiful.

Billy, since receiving the life sentence and dropping my little in the good of the cause, Nell gave up her new fangled ideas and decided upon a quick get-away in the morning. Of course, some of her phony ideas had to be extracted, yet she's the big squeal with me, and when she says, "Lay down, roll over and play dead, dearie," why of course I just roll—and if you ever get caught by a wringer, Billy, you'll do the same thing—get this into your coco, for when once quarantined around the cardiac and trailing for a fancy dame, you will play the deuce instead of the ace in the game of hearts every time.

Each jolt I received on my way through life's vale of tears up to and including the last one

I have used as a peg on which to hang up my experiences—but for the sake of peace—with Nell I do not label them.

The next morning bright and early we left the Grand Cañon of the Yellowstone and the Land of Geysers for Gardiner, passing by Beds of Solfatara and close to the Wedded Trees, and the Virginia Cascades. Arrived at Norris on time, where lunch was served, after which the Concord was on its way back to the starting point—Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel—and with the greatest reluctance and regret we turned our backs upon the most inspiring scenes in nature.

Last night Nell was so bright and cheerful, full of hope and what she would do when she reached her journey's end, while I was lacking in repose. The "bucks" had quit their jingling in my pockets; the ice route as a last resort was supplanting the Mamie Taylors, and putting the chill on my preserved sense of humor, which was canned later, or else I was free to go my way. One of her resolves was to lay aside the

enameled mask, the powder and the rag. Her bon-tons, which created the wasp curves, were to give way for others more sensible which gave the stays a chance to bend.

When the soft velvet curtains of night fell upon us on our way up from Cinnabar, Billy, I felt like the big king in a new deck just hatched in the incubator of love. That night I had "dreams" of a twentieth century convulsion or family earthquake—was the train off the track or had I crawled into the wrong berth? Have not yet found out the reason for those early presentiments.

Today I've got the blues, headache, and I'm homesick. What causes such a combination, or is this experience traveling towards you, Billy?

It was decided aboard the train that we would go flatting for a while in the White City or Schlitzville, and that's where the brain-storm in my dream began to brew—it seemed as if it lasted several years before the big black clouds broke upon our domestic felicity; then it was like those pipes from Hell in the Park—bursting forth in their wrath and fury, quieting down for

a while, then repeating themselves again at irregular intervals. Billy, if yours-to-be ever acts like a human volcano, just take to the double tracked roadbed, or the tall timbers, and never let your wife, or any other wife, whip-saw you, as the results are too disastrous to mention. If there is a convenient fire-escape take to it and avoid complications, unless you wish to be pickled in perfume a-la Osler.

Billy, the coils and fuses in the love battery are broken—the human love furnace has grown cold and the great game of billiards is dull and uninteresting. It seems as if I really have been Oslerized—or the knock-out drops handed to me by this $$$ appliqued artist from the Hub.

The green lithographs, in bales, are no more in evidence, and I feel like the label on the bottle—on the outside—not in it. However, I have just enough of them left for one more hunting trip which will be a "still hunt" for large game. Whether ahead of the season or not, I'm going gunning—I'm loaded for bear and a good supply of the red coffin varnish.

The Oil of Joy burns defeat from the memory

and helps us forget our troubles when the wick is burning low. Mine needs trimming, Billy, or do you think it has been trimmed enough?

From the snowy summit of Mount Washburn to the gloomy caverns of Hell has been the extremes through which this shattered idol of beauty has drawn and quartered my very heart; boiled the milk of human kindness until scorched by the hot flames of ingratitude, which when cooled left the cup of life filled with regret. Introspectively it's like fairyland, but retrospectively it's Hell jarred loose from its foundations. Whether jagged, jarred or jilted makes no difference with me now—I need the money, and that is my game in the race with death, and it's one to the finish—if short, why then a merry one—and but few checks to count at the final cash in. The slate is now sponged and the track clear for a fast race, with the odds—in whose favor?

At The Mines.

Nell and I had come to the "parting of the ways"—she going to her folks down East, while I took to the mines in the West, where after a

few short months of wrestling with dame fortune, she at last smiled upon me, and I found myself the owner of a rich gold mine which was accidentally discovered by my prospector, whom I had grubstaked at so much a month and an interest in the property. The only companion to this wanderer of the desert was a burro, "And her name was Maud." At night these night-in-gales of the wild rend the air with their shrill hee-haws until the forlorn and dusty man with the pick is compelled to arise and silence them.

A strange feeling of loneliness comes o'er me, Billy, and it's tinged with sadness. Wonder (and that's the name of the camp) if the girl Nell is thinking of me? Guess I'll drop her a line and send her one of the beautiful nuggets found on the property and a picture of myself as I look at the mines. Our quarrel was a lover's quarrel, Billy, like many another, and here I am well heeled once more and no one to share it with me.

The old Overland stage was heavily loaded with mail and arrived twice a week. In it was

a letter from Nell. My heart leaped to my throat as I opened it and read: "All is forgiven; I love you, dear, more than ever." Nell said she is looking for me every day, so I suppose I'll go East and get her. The sunshine of gladness will then beam upon me once again, and now that the silver lining of those black clouds shines for us, it is my fervent wish that they never gather again to dispel the sunlight of our home and the happiness in our hearts.

Billy, it's almost two years since that windstorm occurred, now it is all calm and peace, except where our little one—I forgot to tell you that we have a lively bundle of sunshine four months old—the cutest, brightest and "the only" boy among the Rockies. His name is just plain "Ted"—no fancy labels yet until he gets his diplomas for them.

And now the home is complete, and when you come to visit us, Billy, you will find plenty of sunshine, happiness and welcome in our home to greet you. Good-bye.

Yours as ever,

Ben Boston.